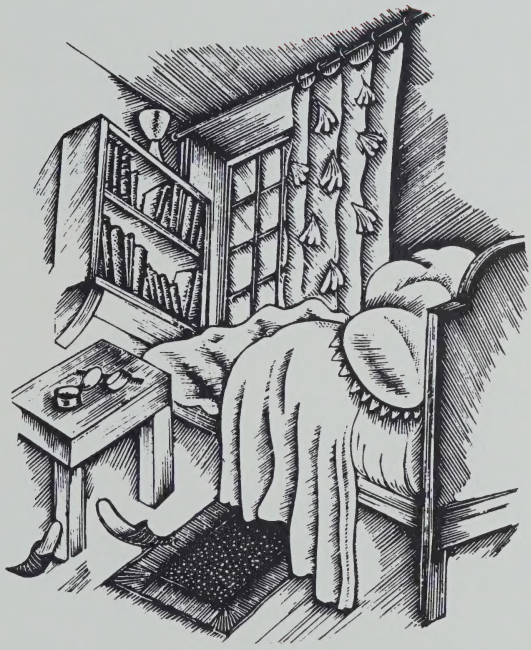
ERIC GILL



HIS LIFE AND ART

Errata

Title-page:
Dates of exhibition should read
"5 October — 29 December 1991"

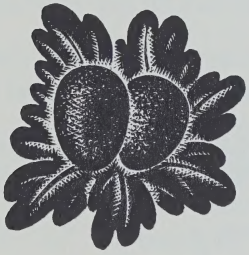
p. 52, items 26-27:
In first line of text, "original drawing" should read "final lay-out"

Eric Gill: His Life and Art

Eric Gill in his workshop at Pigotts.

ERIC GILL

HIS LIFE AND ART



An exhibition in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto

19 April — 30 June 1991

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Page 6: *Troilus and Criseyde.* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Golden Cockerel Press, 1927.
Page 44: "Babe on bough" from *The Constant Mistress.* 1934.
Page 52: "The nuptials of God" from *The Game*, v. 6, No. 34 (January 1923).
Page 59: "The single bed" from *The Constant Mistress.* 1934.
Initial letters throughout and endpiece from *Autumn Midnight* by Frances Cornford. The Poetry Bookshop, 1923.

Preface

T IS NOT SURPRISING that the work of Eric Gill has been often exhibited in galleries and libraries, as the woodcuts, wood engravings and etchings lend themselves perfectly to public viewing, whether as single sheets or in books. During his lifetime, major London galleries such as the Goupil and the Redfern exhibited and sold his sculptures, drawings and graphic art. Indeed, from November 2nd to December 3rd 1934, the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts exhibited seventy-nine "drawings, etchings and wood blocks" by Gill at the Art Gallery of Toronto, many of them being lent by J. Kemp Waldie. Part of a major Toronto-based Gill collection, some of these are now exhibited again, their first public appearance for fifty-seven years.

The exhibition in the Fisher Library draws primarily upon this private collection which was formed before Gill's death in 1940. It was prescient indeed of Kemp Waldie to acquire such a large and diverse collection of Gill's graphic work when the drawings, books and very limited editions of the prints were still readily available. There are a few well-known and extensive collections of Gill manuscripts and printed works in public institutions: the William Andrews Clark Library at UCLA, the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco, the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the St. Bride Printing Library, the British Museum, the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, and the Doris Lewis Rare Book Room at the University of Waterloo. There are as well many enthusiastic private collectors of Gill's work.

The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto is proud to host this major Gill exhibition and acknowledge the lenders to it. First, our sincere thanks go to the Toronto owners of the private collection from which the majority of the items have been

borrowed. The Doris Lewis Rare Book Room, University of Waterloo, through its Head, Susan Bellingham, has lent some unique items from the collection assiduously built up by Doris Lewis, William Watson and Ms. Bellingham. We have also been able to draw upon the collections of the Robertson Davies Library at Massey College for a classical stone inscription and Edward Johnston material. Professor Douglas Chambers has lent a magnificent drawing of a male nude; and books from the collection of the Fisher Library and the collections of Richard Landon and Alan Horne are also displayed.

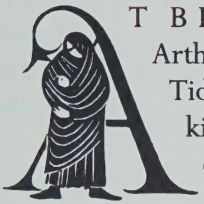
The exhibition has been arranged and the catalogue written by Gill *aficionados* Alan Horne and Guy Upjohn, with the section on typography contributed by Richard Landon.

Eric Gill would not, one supposes, be surprised that the excitement engendered by his work in his own generation is still manifest in 1991, more than fifty years after his death.

Richard Landon
Director, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Case 1

Early Years and the Move to Ditchling (1882-1913)



T BRIGHTON, SUSSEX, on 22 February 1882, Arthur Eric Rowton Gill was born to Rose and Arthur Tidman Gill, the second of thirteen children. His father, a kind and conscientious man given to rather theatrical dramatic renderings which embarrassed his children in public and private, was assistant minister at a chapel operated for a curious eighteenth-century Methodist sect. His mother, Rose King, had been a professional singer before her marriage. Both his parents apparently much loved their children, but Rose could be rather sardonic, and his father established a physically demanding regimen for the upbringing of the children. God was ever present, in the most literal way, for a large eye with the text "Thou God seest me" was pinned up on the breakfast room wall.

Eric Gill attended a conventional day school at nearby Hove, enjoying both the uninspired teaching and the sporting activities, but when he was fourteen, his father joined the Church of England proper and in 1897 the family moved to Chichester. Eric Gill spent one year at Chichester Theological College before studying at the Technical and Art School (1898-99), from which he went to London where he worked in the architectural offices of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Besides his studies in architecture, he also joined Edward Johnston's lettering class at the Central School of Art and Design, where Noel Rooke was among his fellow students. Gill's first paid stone-cut inscription was completed while he was a student at the Central School, and by 1903 he had given up architecture for letter-cutting. He taught the use of gold leaf at the Central School in 1904 and lettering for stonemasons at the London County Council's Paddington Institute in 1905. As he wrote in his autobiography, stone-carving was the basis for his income for the whole of his working life.

then show as in Fig. 26. Held in this way the tool will pass flat over the wood without any obstruction from any part of the fingers or hand.

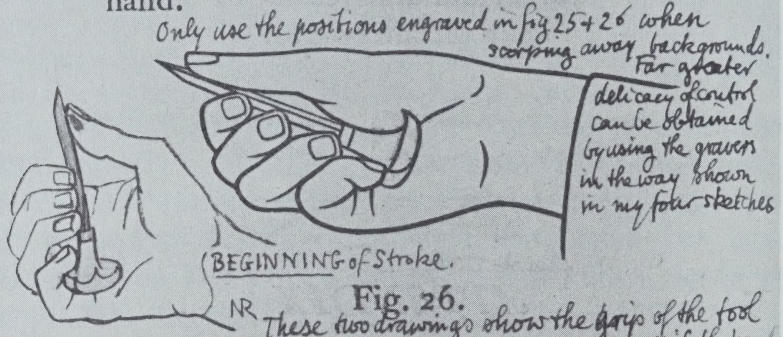
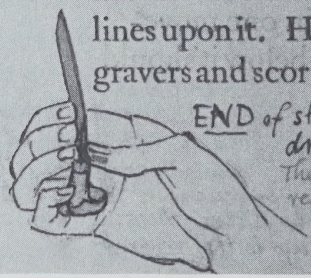

Only use the positions engraved in fig 25 + 26 when scorping away backgrounds.
Far greater delicacy of control can be obtained by using the gravers in the way shown in my four sketches
BEGINNING of Stroke.

Fig. 26.

NR These two drawings show the grip of the tool as if the hand is lifted from the block, & turned over back of hand downwards.

The following figures, 28 to 31, show the different methods of engraving and are placed in the order in which a beginner should employ them. He should begin with patterns and pictures of white lines on black. The normal development of this first method is the silhouette with white lines upon it. Having attained skill with gravers and scorpers he may proceed to en-



END of stroke. See note on page 20, & drawings & noted on page 33. The part of the thumb marked with red ink, should be very firmly pressed down onto the block.

A page from *Wood Engraving*, by R. J. Beedham. (S. Dominic's Press, 1921), annotated by Noel Rooke. (Collection: Richard Landon)

Gill married Ethel Moore on 4 August 1904 in his father's church in Chichester. They had a flat in Battersea, and entered into the "enchanted garden of Christian marriage". Sexually, Gill and his wife were ideally matched, and both were enthusiastic participants. Their first child, Betty, was born on 1 June 1905 (two other daughters followed; Petra on 18 August 1906, and Joanna in 1910), but according to Gill's diary, his many extra-marital sexual adventures began soon after in 1906. In 1905 the Gills moved to Hammersmith, where the influence of William Morris was still strong, and which was already a haven for fine printers, and a surprising number of other intellectual craftsmen. There were located the Chiswick Press, the Kelmscott Press and the Doves Press. Gill met Emery Walker and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson; Edward Johnston had moved there, as had Douglas (later Hilary) Pepler, who became one of the more important influences on Gill's life. Gill became enthusiastically involved in the Hammersmith Club for Working Men and in the Fabian Society. He continued his inscriptional work and experimented with wood engraving. But soon the Gills were disenchanted, both with the Fabians and with the area itself, which they found to be a difficult place in which to bring up children. They found a house in Sussex at Ditchling, and moved there in the summer of 1907.

At Sopers, a small, Georgian brick house in Ditchling Village, Gill felt he had escaped the trap of London life, though he continued to spend much time there. His lettering provided the income he required, and he began to work seriously on wood engraving, using that method to make title pages and chapter headings for Insel Verlag editions produced under the auspices of Count Kessler in Germany. In 1909 he started to sculpt figures in stone, and in 1911 had his first sculpture exhibition at the Chenil Gallery in Chelsea, which was a great success.

About this time, Gill found that he needed the certainty of a religion to guide his life and began to explore catholicism. In May 1912 he spent a few days at a Benedictine abbey at Louvain, and on his return to

"The Purchaser" from *The Devil's Devices*, by Douglas Pepler. (The Hampshire House Workshops, 1915.)

Ditchling, both he and Ethel took instruction and were received into the Catholic Church in February 1913.

Cases 2 and 3

Eric Gill at Hopkins Crank, Ditchling (1913-24)

THE GILL FAMILY moved from Sopers in Ditchling Village to Hopkins Crank, a house some two miles away on Ditchling Common. Edward Johnston had moved to Ditchling and soon after the Gills had moved to the Common, the Peplers took over their old house in the village. Gill and his family now formed the nucleus of an artistic community in which he combined the roles of master-craftsman, social prophet and sexual experimenter. The community at Ditchling was also founded on the principle of living by pre-industrial values; and both life and work were diffused with catholicism.

The Stations of the Cross, fourteen five-foot panels to be carved in bas relief, commissioned for Westminster Cathedral, dominated Gill's life as a sculptor from 1913 to 1918. He was also becoming more involved with Pepler and his S. Dominic's Press. As MacCarthy writes:

> *This was the beginning of the flowering of Gill's talent as a wood engraver and typographer. Ditchling saw the development of his work in graphics, his most individual and enduring of achievements: his mastery of linear communication, his gift for the disposal of the image on the page.*[1]

[1] Fiona MacCarthy. *Eric Gill*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989, p 128.

The Press produced booklets, broadsides, rhyme sheets and posters, many written by Pepler and illustrated by Gill with woodcuts and wood engravings. The printing was inconsistent, usually lively, often very uneven, but occasionally marvellously fluent.

For three months in 1918, Gill served in the Royal Air Force, and during that period, Desmond Chute, a young artist and "disciple" was left in charge of the Ditchling community. After the war, with Edward Johnston and his anti-Catholic wife fading from the scene, Chute became the third member of the intimate triumvirate with Gill and Pepler, and there was more emphasis on catholicism. With encouragement from Father Vincent McNabb, an influential Dominican priest, Gill joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, a lay order of which Chute was already a member. It seemed an ideal way of life to Gill, for "Tertiaries" lived in the 'real' world but took on more spiritual and religious duties than those performed by ordinary Catholics. Gill's wife, Ethel (now known as Mary) and Douglas Pepler (now Hilary) also became Tertiaries. In parallel with this religious order, in 1921 the Ditchling community founded a craft guild, the Guild of SS Joseph and Dominic.

Other activities occupied Gill during this time. In 1920, along with several other engravers, including David Jones, Robert Gibbings, Gordon Craig and John Nash, he became a founder-member of the Society of Wood Engravers. David Jones came to Ditchling for a protracted visit, replacing Desmond Chute as the favourite disciple and fellow-artist, and was briefly engaged to Petra Gill. Gill's artistic productivity was maintaining its momentum: he was doing stone carving, writing and engraving, and he produced a series of lovely drawings of his daughters. Gill's obsession with sex (he included his daughters in his sexual experimentation) became a general concern, and was one reason why Gill and Pepler were drawing apart. There was also dissension between Pepler and Gill over Pepler's handling of the community's finances, and according to Cleverdon, Pepler's refusal to hand over the wood blocks

"Earth receiving" from *Procreant Hymn*, by E. Powys Mathers. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1926.) From Private Collection.

which Gill had engraved and which Pepler believed were the property of the Ditchling community. Pepler's son David became engaged to Betty Gill, much to Gill's disapproval, and the continuation of the Pepler-Gill partnership became impossible. Gill formally resigned from the Guild of SS Joseph and Dominic on 22 July 1924, and moved with his family and several other members of the Ditchling community to a deserted monastery at Capel-y-ffin in the Black Mountains of south Wales.

Case 4

Eric Gill at Capel-y-ffin (1924-28)

HILE THE GILLS WERE at Capel-y-ffin, Gill completed many major artistic works. He finished a sculpture begun in Ditchling — one that is generally regarded as one of his finest sculptures, a stone carving done in black marble of the torso of Christ, known as "Deposition". He then carved "The Sleeping Christ", designed the *Perpetua* and *Gill Sans* type faces for the Monotype Corporation, and perhaps even more importantly, completed wood engravings for many Golden Cockerel Press books.

Gill had first turned down the request of Robert Gibbings, artist, wood engraver and proprietor of the Golden Cockerel Press, to make some engravings for his books, apparently on the grounds that Gibbings was not a Catholic. This refusal was retracted when Gibbings suggested Gill should illustrate *Sonnets and Verses* by Enid Clay, Gill's eldest sister, which became the first example of a major artistic collaboration. At Capel, Gill completed the engravings for the Golden Cockerel *The Song of Songs* (1925), *Procreant Hymn* (1926) and *Troilus and Criseyde* (1927); later

Top: "The kiss"
Bottom: "Ibi dabo tibi"

Song of Songs. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1925.) From Private Collection.

examples of this partnership are *The Canterbury Tales* (four volumes, 1929-30); *The Four Gospels* (1931); Enid Clay's *The Constant Mistress* (1934); and *Glue and Lacquer* (published in 1941 after Gill's death). Gill and Robert Gibbings and his wife Moira formed a sexual as well as an artistic *ménage à trois*, and during his time at Capel, Gill spent many weekends at Waltham St. Lawrence in Berkshire with the Gibbingses.

Gill's enduring interest in sex and the female form can be seen most clearly in the engravings of this period. *A Song of Songs*, with its many frankly erotic illustrations became quite a scandal, but Gill was defended by Father John O'Connor, the parish priest of St. Cuthbert's Church in Bradford. In reply to the Dominicans who were having misgivings about Gill, O'Connor declared that the Catholic Church was hypocritical in its objections to Gill's eroticism, with the argument that those who live a sheltered existence away from the 'real' world are not entitled to pronounce upon nudity. It is interesting to note that O'Connor edited the text for the Golden Cockerel edition. The illustrations for *Procreant Hymn* are blatantly erotic, and one illustration in particular once again got Gill into trouble with the Church: the scene where it appears that God's hand, reaching down from Heaven, is blessing the act of copulation below. Gill received many complaints from other Catholics, including a demand that the book be suppressed (Gill's response was that all copies had been sold). The alternative illustrations which Gill produced are even more explicit.

While at Capel, Gill took on another young man as assistant and disciple. Douglas Cleverdon, a friend of Desmond Chute, was a Bristol bookseller, and he took over the distribution of Gill's book, *Id Quod Visum Placet*, and then himself published Gill's *Art and Love* (1928). René Hague, a former Jesuit novice, was living in the Black Mountains when the Gills moved there and was taken into their household. As time went on, Hague become increasingly devoted to Joanna, the youngest of Gill's daughters, while Betty had finally married David Pepler in 1927 and Petra had decided to marry Denis Tegetmeier. Gill's own sexual exploits

"The Pardoner's Tale" from *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1929-30.)

seemed now to have settled into a more ordinary, extra-familial kind, with the Gibbingses and a variety of mistresses.

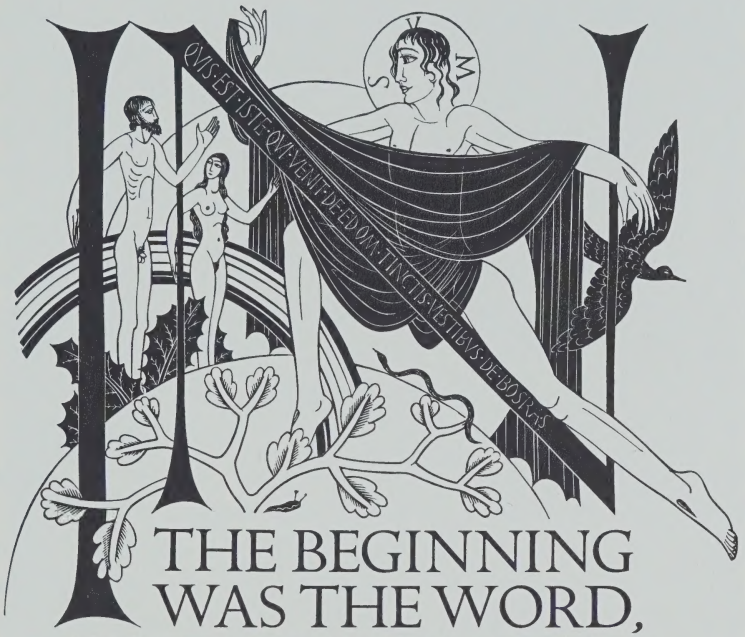
Cases 5 and 6

Eric Gill at Pigotts (1928-40)

Because of a growing feeling that Capel was just too remote, and perhaps because Gill was generally disenchanted by what he might have considered the defection of his daughters, the Gills moved again in 1928, this time to Pigotts in Sheen, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Pigotts was a complex of buildings built in a quadrangle pattern with a workshop for Gill, a chapel, and quarters for Petra and Denis Tegetmeier, Joanna and René Hague, and the Hague and Gill Press.

Gill had established the Press in 1929 as a gesture of generosity to celebrate the marriage of Joan and René, and handed it over to Hague in March 1930. It had some resemblance to the S. Dominic's Press, at least in spirit and beliefs, though it was certainly less of a hand press, more commercial, more "professional" and perhaps less spontaneous. In addition to the Albion hand press, the Press possessed a motorized platen press, for Gill's attitude towards machine production had softened. Its first publication, *The Story of Amnon* (1930), contains one illustration by Gill and was set in Baskerville. Gill designed *Joanna*, one of his fine type faces, specifically for the use of Hague and Gill.

By now Gill had already achieved a considerable reputation as a sculptor. New work included a job he shared with Jacob Epstein, the carving of sculptures for the outside of the new London Underground building (1928-29); and in 1930 he produced the best known of all his carvings, the figures of "Prospero and Ariel", for the entrance to Broadcasting House in London. In another artistic arena, in 1929



IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANY THING MADE THAT WAS MADE. IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. AND THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS; AND THE DARKNESS COMPREHENDED IT NOT.

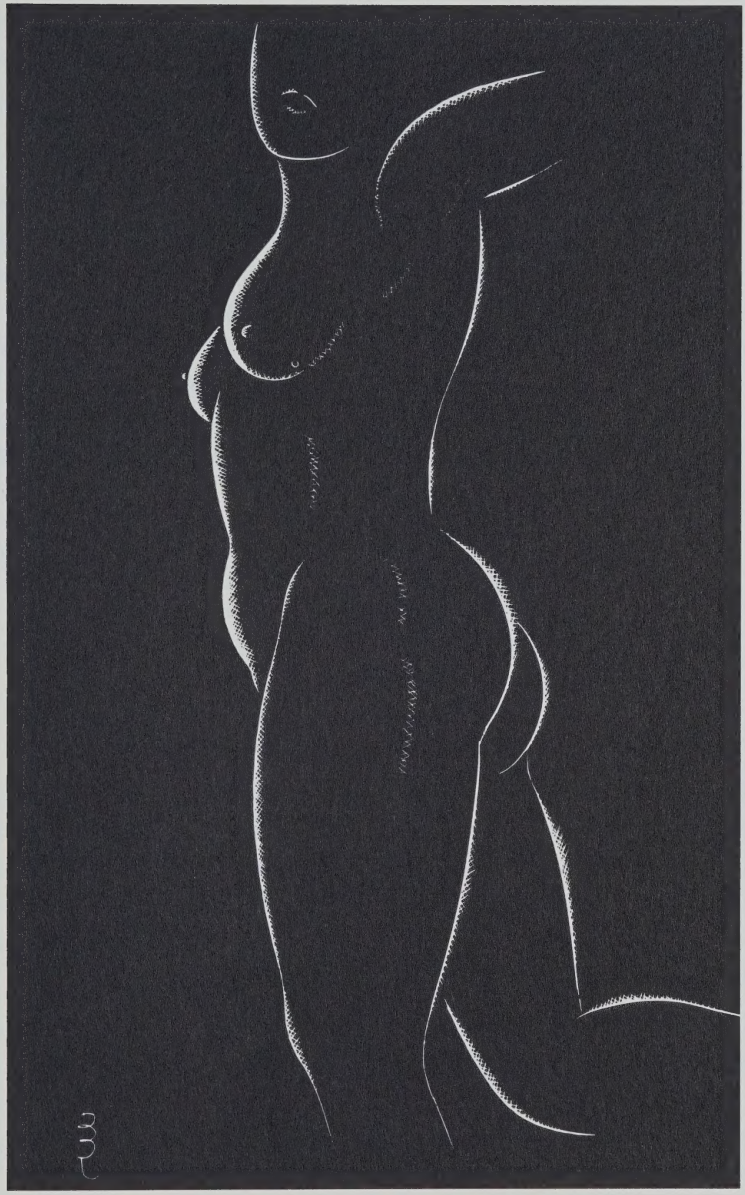
"The Creation"; page from *The Four Gospels*. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1931.)

Cleverdon published Gill's collected *Engravings*, having obtained the Ditchling wood blocks, then in the possession of Stanley Morison. For this book, Gill engraved a self-portrait for the frontispiece and wrote the introduction. Gill then began working on engravings for his two major Golden Cockerel books, the four-volume *The Canterbury Tales* (1929-30) and *The Four Gospels* (1931). Gill had been commissioned by Gibbings to design a Golden Cockerel type face, and its use in *The Four Gospels* shows how well it combined with Gill's exquisite engravings, creating one of the most beautiful books ever to come from an English private press. Of *The Four Gospels*, the new partners of the Golden Cockerel Press (Christopher Sandford, Owen Rutter and Anthony Sandford) wrote in 1936 that it was "a flower of English romantic genius, it is also surely, thanks to its illustrator, Eric Gill, the book among all books in which Roman type has been best mated with any kind of illustration."[2]

Gill began to work again for his old patron, Count Harry Kessler of Weimar. In 1930, Kessler published the magnificent Cranach Press edition of *Hamlet*, with eighty wood engravings by Gordon Craig and the title designed and engraved by Gill. In 1931, Gill did his finest work for Kessler: the Cranach Press version of "The Song of Songs", *Canticum Canticorum*, which contains eleven wood engravings, each having the same feeling of exuberant eroticism present in the Golden Cockerel illustrations but done in a very different style. Gill cut the engravings for Kessler as "white line" engravings, and with great success used a fine stipple technique to give texture to the black areas.

During these years, Gill's sexual and public lives became even more distinct. He resumed his affair with his sister Gladys, who had divorced her second husband, and according to his diaries, he now extended his sexual interests into even wilder experimentation. There was however

[2] *Chanticleer: A Bibliography of the Golden Cockerel Press*, April 1921 - 1936 August. London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1936, p. 36.



Nude from *Twenty-five Nudes*. (J. M. Dent, 1938.)

no lessening of Gill's enthusiasm and energy in many artistic areas. In 1930 he started writing *An Essay on Typography* while in hospital recovering from a frightening attack of amnesia, which has never been fully explained. Printed by Hague and Gill, the book was published by Sheed and Ward in 1931. Two volumes of life drawings were published, *Twenty-Five Nudes* in 1938 and *Drawings from Life* in 1940, also the publication year of his *Autobiography*. He illustrated two books for the Limited Editions Club (*Hamlet* in 1933, printed by Hague and Gill, and *Henry the Eighth* in 1939); engraved seven illustrations for the 40-volume "New Temple Shakespeare", published by J. M. Dent in 1934, and eight for the four-volume *The New Testament*, also for Dent; and several more books for the Golden Cockerel Press. Cleverdon writes of Gill's illustrations for *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne*, published by Dent and printed by Hague and Gill in 1938:

> *In this, his final sequence of engravings revealed a marked development in style, matched by a new intensity of power that puts one in mind of William Blake.* The Holy Sonnets *formed a fitting culmination to the engravings of an artist whose work transcended craftsmanship.*[3]

Gill went to Jerusalem to carve ten panels on the Palestine Museum (1934); and created the relief sculpture of "The Creation of Adam" for the League of Nations council hall in Geneva (1935-38). He continued to work, write, lecture and carve until illness forced him into hospital, and even there he worked on illustrations for a new book before he died of lung cancer on 17 November 1940.

Gill was one of the most influential figures in twentieth century British art. He was a fierce but idiosyncratic polemicist, whose ideas owed

[3] Douglas Cleverdon. "Eric Gill: A personal record" in Christopher Skelton. *The Engravings of Eric Gill*. Wellingborough: Skelton, 1983, p. xv.

"Thou hast made me" from *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne*. (J. M. Dent, 1938.) From Private Collection.

much to Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris and Coomaraswamy. He is renowned particularly for his stone-carved lettering, his type faces, sculptures and wood engravings. He was not a technical innovator as a wood engraver, but his engravings are imbued with a magnificent sensuality and a love of life. A profoundly religious man, Gill was also a highly sexual person. The illustrations for *Glue and Lacquer*, published after his death by the Golden Cockerel Press in 1941, show the same erotic interest in the naked form that was present throughout Gill's life. Fiona MacCarthy begins her fine study of *Eric Gill* (Faber and Faber, 1989) with these words:

> *Eric Gill was a great artist-craftsman. Others (though not many) matched him as a sculptor, wood engraver, letter cutter or typographer. But no one has approached his mastery over such a range of activity.*[4]

and ends thus:

> *One way and another, Gill left so much behind him: over 100 figures or reliefs in stone; over 750 pieces of inscriptional lettering; half a dozen typefaces; 1,000 engravings; 300 pamphlets, articles and books. He made wonderful things. But in some ways one remembers him most for his impression on the minds of other people. Gill was a most extraordinary person, and it is very strange how his immediacy lingers.*
>
> *Only the day before I finished this biography I heard from Philip Hagreen, Gill's companion at Capel, now aged ninety-seven. Eric Gill, he wrote to tell me, was not a star or a planet, he was a comet. A comet has a tail.*[5]

[4] MacCarthy. p. vii.
[5] MacCarthy. p. 294.

Case 7

Eric Gill: Nudes, Portraits and Sculptures

A LARGE PROPORTION of the items on display are examples of Gill's graphic work, which reflects the strengths of the collections on which the exhibit is based. Eric Gill's genius extended far beyond his illustrations and prints, however, and some account of his work in other areas is necessary to provide a more complete picture of Gill the artist.

Gill was an extremely passionate man; passionate, curious and naive. He adored women and their bodies, and throughout his life he had an open and adventurous interest in sex. As he wrote in his autobiography, it was curiosity about sex even more than sensuality or lust that brought him to his first sexual experience with a woman. Many of his drawings of women show his frank interest in depicting female genitals, drawings which he would innocently display to mixed groups of friends who were, of course, duly shocked. He had the same interest in the male organ; his studies of his own penis were bequeathed to the Royal College of Surgeons in London (but rejected by them as "not showing any pathological condition" — which is why they are now in the British Museum.)

Despite his precocious sexuality, he found the all too human presence of a live model disturbed his concentration. Perhaps because of these personal feelings, he was opposed to the traditional method of students who learn to draw by using nude models:

> *Man is by nature a clothed animal and the insistence on studying him naked is about as reasonable as it would be to insist on the necessity of studying bare trees or shaved horses.*[6]

[6] Eric Gill. *Art-Nonsense and Other Essays.* London: Cassell & Walterson, 1929, p.

Top: "Lovers in tent" (1929). From the Collections at the University of Waterloo Library.

Bottom left: "Artist and mirror" 1, 1932. From *Sculpture and the Living Model* by Eric Gill. (Sheed & Ward, 1932.)

Bottom right: "Artist and mirror" 2, 1932. From Private Collection.

Gill's published nude studies were made when he was in his fifties. He wrote in the introduction to *Twenty-Five Nudes* (1938):

> *If you are going to draw from the naked model at all, the best time to do it is rather later in life, when the experience of living has fulfilled the mind and given a deeper, more sensual as well as a more spiritual meaning to material things.*[7]

He found the naked human form (and sex) quite funny — "human life is not a matter only of tears and sighs, but also, and equally and even more importantly, a matter of laughter." (*Twenty-Five Nudes.*) — and he could find justification for his delight in depicting the erotic and sensual and the nearly pornographic:

> *All the best art is religious. Religious means according to the rule of God. All art that is Godly, that is made without concern for worldly advantage, is religious.*[8]

In *Drawing from Life* (1940) he quotes a letter from "a Catholic priest" (in fact from Desmond Chute) — "If naked bodies can arouse a hell-hunger of lust, they can and do kindle a hunger for heaven." Gill, the devout Catholic and tireless artist-craftsman, seems to have found a way to excuse, to himself at least, both his extraordinary sexual activities and his erotic, explicit art. He frequently produced alternative illustrations for private editions of books done for a controlled circulation when he wanted to depict scenes in a way which he felt the public would not accept. Some of his "private" drawings are now held in public collections in such places as the Clark Library, UCLA, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library, and the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

[7] Gill. *Twenty-Five Nudes.* London: J. M. Dent, 1938, np.
[8] Gill. *The Future of Sculpture.* Privately printed, 1928, p. 8.

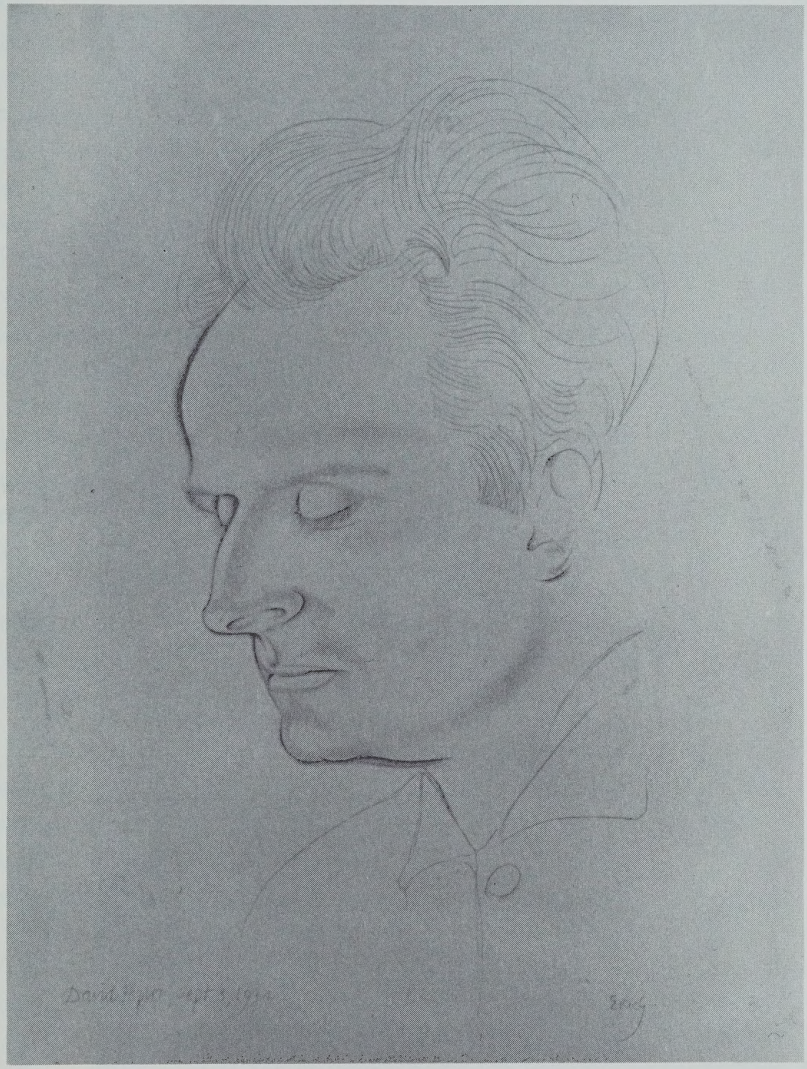
Gill also made many fine portraits of family and friends. In most cases, these drawings and engravings show much detail and clarity: most are done in profile, are highly "finished" and decorative, but reveal little of the sitter's character. One moving exception is his drawing of David Pepler, the husband of Gill's daughter Betty. Pepler died of cancer of the throat in September 1934, and Gill spent the morning after the mass and requiem drawing his portrait.

For many people, and certainly for many of his contemporaries, Gill the artist was most highly regarded for his sculptures. Late in 1909, when his wife was pregnant with their third child and Gill was going through a period of relative sexual deprivation, moved by his desire for her, he made a sculpture of her body, almost as a way of sexual relief. He wrote in his *Autobiography* that "my first erotic drawing was not done on the back of an envelope but a week or so's work on a decent piece of hard stone . . . [the pleasure was in] not merely touching and seeing but actually making her". The first sculpture he showed was of "Estin Thalassa" (1910), and though it was far from a masterpiece, Gill's patron Count Kessler was very enthusiastic. Sir William Rothenstein was similarly encouraging over the rough outlines of Gill's "Cupid" which were drawn on a postcard and mailed to him in Italy.

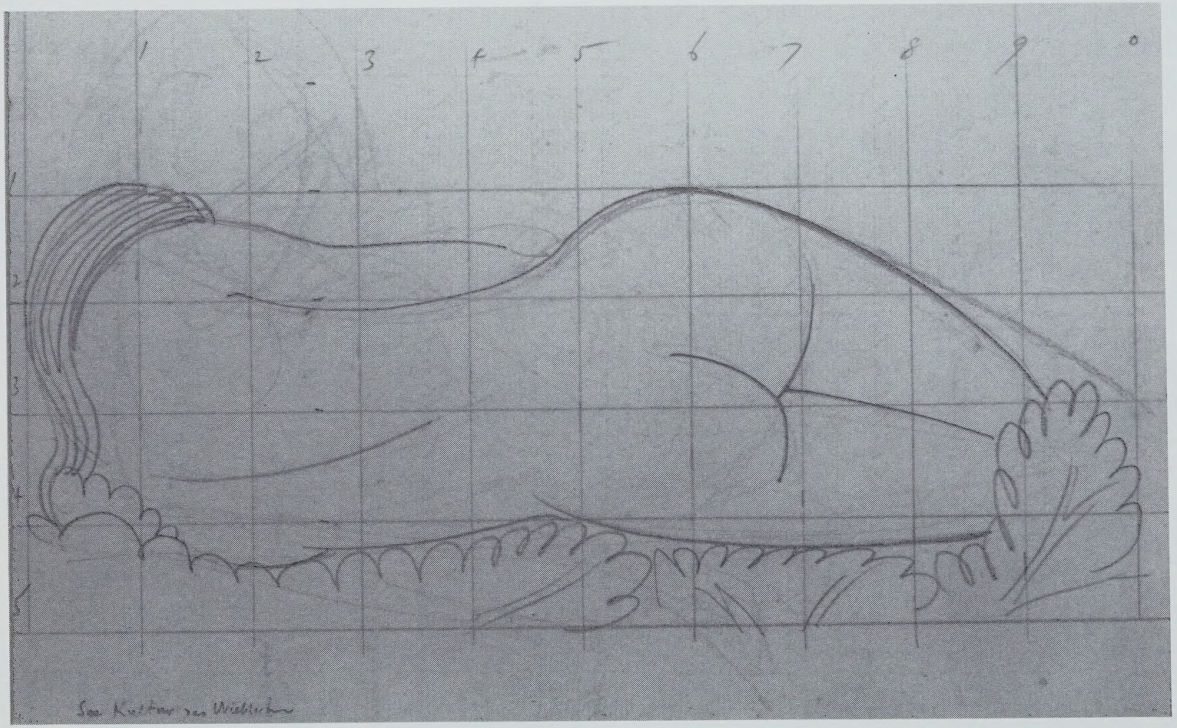
These and most subsequent works were carved directly in stone, rather than being copied from a model. One writer claimed that until Gill began the revival of direct carving, no artist had carved in stone for almost two hundred years. Henry Moore wrote, however, that:

> *I don't believe that direct carving in itself produces good sculpture: it doesn't. What produces good sculpture is a good mind. You don't make a good sculpture just by using a certain process, although it could help.*[9]

[9] *With Henry Moore*. Photographs by G. Levine. London: 1978.



Pencil drawing of David Pepler (1934). From the Collections at the University of Waterloo Library.

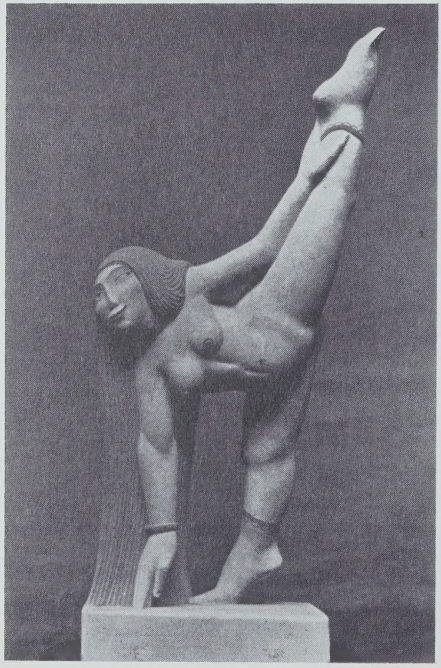


Pencil drawing of female nude (not dated), squared-up in preparation for sculpture(?) From the Collections at the University of Waterloo Library.

Whatever the reason, Gill produced many magnificent works in stone. He went from strength to strength, sculpting statues and bas reliefs, including "Mother and Child" (1910); a commision for fourteen five-foot panels depicting the Stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral (1914-18); and a War Memorial for Leeds University (1916). This last was his most notorious commission, for his designs proposed that the imposing monument for that great commercial city should show Christ turning the money changers out of the Temple. On top of this effrontery, the figures were to be carved fully clothed in the sort of dress worn by the city's financial leaders. Gill defended his concept with great energy and no willingness to compromise, particularly after the design was rejected. The carving was finally made in a smaller version as a frieze (1922-23). Other sculptures followed in great number, including "Torso" (1920); a black marble statue of the body of Christ, known as "Deposition" (1924); the humourous "Splits" 1 and 2 (1923); a series of figures representing the Winds done in bas relief for the London Underground headquarters at St. James's station (1925); "Prospero and Ariel" (Broadcasting House, London, 1931); ten panels for the new Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem (1934-37); and his last major public commission, "The Creation of Man" for the League of Nations building in Geneva (1937-38).

Though not, in retrospect, a major world sculptor, Gill did produce some magnificent pieces. They reveal his belief in a "truth to materials" approach, and are part of his self-confessed attempt to reintegrate "bed and board, the small farm and the workshop, the home and the school, earth and heaven". David Jones declared that

> *His carvings could be irritatingly mannered . . . I think he conceived in relief rather than in the round even when the work was technically 'in the round' . . . Linear grace he always had, but not always foiled enough, so that too often an elegance*



Top: Eric Gill at work on "Prospero and Ariel", Broadcasting House, London, 1931. (photo BBC)

Bottom:
Sculpture: "Splits No. 2", 1923.

and sometimes a positive slickness harmed his work — the workman again! . . . His work never profits by those technical incompetences and fumblings which, one must admit, sometimes add to the interest of less accomplished artists.[10]

Case 8

Eric Gill and the Art of Typography

"Lettering is for us the Roman alphabet and the Roman alphabet is lettering" An Essay on Typography. *1931*

ILL MET EDWARD JOHNSTON in 1901 and quickly became a close friend and disciple of the most influential calligrapher of the twentieth century. Johnston had just begun teaching classes in writing and illumination at the Central School of Art and Design in London, under the general direction of W. R. Lethaby, the architect who carried on the traditions of William Morris. Gill's fellow students included Noel Rooke, Laurence Christie, Grailey Hewitt and the much older T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. Gill also took classes in stone masonry and the combination resulted in his first commission for the carving of a tombstone and, as he remarked in his *Autobiography* (1940), "from that day to this I've never been out of a job."

[10]David Jones. "Eric Gill as sculptor" in *Epoch and Artist*. London: 1959, pp. 292-3.

FORASMUCH AS MANY HAVE TAKEN IN HAND TO SET FORTH IN ORDER A DECLARATION OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US, EVEN AS THEY DELIVERED them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

THERE WAS IN THE DAYS OF HEROD, THE KING OF JUDÆA, A CERTAIN PRIEST NAMED ZACHARIAS, OF THE COURSE OF ABIA: AND HIS WIFE WAS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and

"The visitation"; page from *The Four Gospels*. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1931.)

His intense interest in letter-forms was thus begun right at the outset of his career as an artist, his model for the Roman capital letters being the Trajan column and its derivatives; while he emphasized an understanding of pen letters for minuscule Roman and Italic forms in the chapter called "Inscriptions in stone" he wrote for Johnston's *Writing & Illuminating & Lettering* (1906). The great amount of inscriptional work he did during the following forty years consolidated his beliefs in the interaction of chisel and stone and pen and paper as the basis of letter forms.

It was not, however, until 1925 that Gill was asked by Stanley Morison to design a type-face for the Monotype Corporation and began work on what was to become *Perpetua*. He had of course collaborated with Hilary Pepler on a number of S. Dominic's Press books between 1916 and 1924 when they both lived on Ditchling Common and understood the influence of typographic design, especially as it related to the use of woodcuts and wood engravings as book illustrations and decorations. In 1927 the Monotype Corporation commissioned a sans-serif face, the only type face to be named after Gill, and in 1930 he designed *Joanna* for the use of the printing-shop he established with his son-in-law, René Hague, at Piggotts. *Golden Cockerel* type was the result of Gill's close collaboration with Robert and Moira Gibbings and the Golden Cockerel Press. He also created *Solus*, an "Egyptian" face, for Monotype in 1929; *Aries*, for the Stourton Press of B. Fairfax Hall, in 1932; *Jubilee*, a display face, cut by Stephenson Blake in 1934; and *Bunyan*, a Roman face first used by Hague and Gill to print the Limited Editions Club edition of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* in 1936. In 1929 Gill had created a floriated capital N for use in Number VII of *The Fleuron* and in 1936 completed a whole alphabet of floriated upper-case letters. In all he designed eleven type-faces (including *Perpetua Greek* and *Felicity*, the original Italic designed to accompany *Perpetua*), three of which are in general use today and are believed to be among the most beautiful and influential type designs of the twentieth century. Referring to *Perpetua*,

Stanley Morison wrote "the capitals that he did, I think, will be immortal. They'll be used as long as the Roman alphabet is ever used anywhere." *Perpetua*, *Joanna* and *Gill Sans* are now available from Monotype as digitalized software packages, and this catalogue is set in *Perpetua*.

Roman Letters

A Roman memorial stone tablet for a woman called Ancharia Facultas, dated 1st or 2nd century A.D., from Massey College provides a record for Gill's Roman letter forms. These capital letters, which are very similar to the letters on the Trajan column, are determined to a considerable extent by the action of the chisel in the stone, which creates a preponderence of straight lines and natural serifs. They can be compared to a Roman alphabet cut in hoptonwood stone by Eric Gill in 1909. For the whole of his career, Gill regarded his principal occupation as that of a cutter of monumental lettering, and the direct influence of the earlier, often anonymous, masters is readily apparent on Gill's own head-stone, in lettering designed by himself and cut by Laurie Cribb, where Gill is designated "stone carver". His distinctive style of letter-forms for head-stone inscriptions was fully developed by 1906, when he designed and cut the beautiful stone for the grave of Mary Boulton. The stone plaque on the wall of the entrance to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library was cut by David Kindersley, one of Gill's many apprentices.

Perpetua

When Stanley Morison was first considering the commission of a new Roman type for the Monotype Corporation in 1925, it occurred to him that "the fine serif is not in origin calligraphic but epigraphic; not written but sculptured" and thus Gill was asked "to make drawings of the letters he had long been habitually carving". When the drawings were ready, Morison decided not to make photographic and pantographic reproductions of them but, in order to "preserve absolutely the chiselled quality" of Gill's letters, he gave the drawings to Charles Malin, one of the few

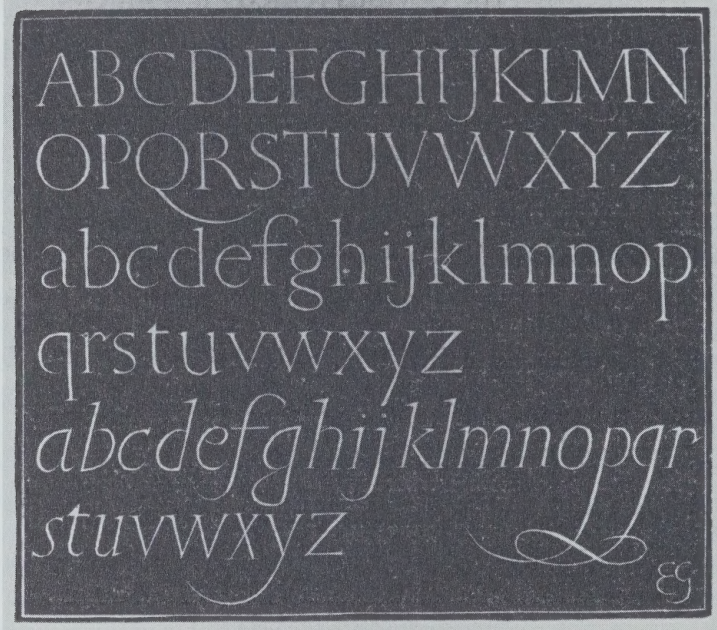
remaining Parisian hand punch-cutters, who produced a complete set of punches in 12 - point Didot. Matrices were struck and the type was cast in the traditional manner. It was first used to print *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (whence its name) in 1929, illustrated with wood engravings by Gill, to be inserted in number VII of *The Fleuron* to accompany an article, "Eric Gill: Sculptor of Letters" by Paul Beaujon (the pseudonym of Beatrice Warde). The first public use of *Perpetua*, also in 1929, was for Gill's *Art-Nonsense and Other Essays* (London, Cassell). The title-page reproduces one of the versions of Gill's wood engraving "Belle Sauvage", the model for which was Beatrice Warde.

Gill Sans

In 1916 Edward Johnston designed a sans-serif type-face for the use of the London underground railway system. Gill attended meetings and discussed the design with Johnston and Gerard Meynell but did not contribute to it. In 1926 Gill visited Douglas Cleverdon, a Bristol bookseller, to paint a fascia for his shop in a sans-serif face. While there he spent a week in bed recuperating from the 'flu and, to amuse himself, drew two alphabets for Cleverdon in a blank book, one Roman and one sans-serif. A few months later Morison visited Bristol, saw the shop sign and the book of alphabets and decided to commission a sans-serif type from Gill for Monotype. Morison was reacting to a series of German sans-serif type faces then available which he found mechanical and cold; the so-called "T-square types".

Gill was greatly influenced by Johnston's 1916 design and acknowledged his debt to it. *Gill Sans* was not designed as a book face (although it has been used as such and was made available in a full range of sizes) but works best for signs, railway timetables and emphatic titling (as on the cover and envelope of *Unholy Trinity* by Gill with illustrations by Denis Tegetmeier; printed by Hague and Gill for J. M. Dent in 1938). Its first public showing occurred in 1928 when Morison used it for the programme of the annual meeting of the Federation of Master Printers at Blackpool. It was, of course, violently attacked for its eccentricity.

with their customary as well as their essential differences. ¶ Properly speaking there is no such thing as an alphabet of Italic Capitals, and where upright or nearly upright Italics are used ordinary upright



(Figure 25 shows the Capitals, Roman Lower-case and Italics with their customary as well as their essential differences.)

Roman Capitals go perfectly well with them. But as Italics are commonly made with a considerable

Joanna type face, from *An Essay on Typograhpy*, by Eric Gill. (Sheed & Ward, 1931.)

Joanna

In 1928 the Gill family and entourage moved to Pigotts, near High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. With René Hague, he established a private press there, and for its use designed *Joanna* and *Joanna Italic*, named for his youngest daughter who married Hague in 1930. Gill typically defined his press by writing that "the real distinction between such a press and others is not in the typographical enthusiasm of its proprietors, but simply in the fact that a 'private' press prints solely what it chooses to print, whereas a 'public' press prints what its customers demand of it." Hague and Gill did, in fact, produce a number of polemic pamphlets, many of them written by Gill, but among its first publications was *An Essay on Typography*; five hundred copies printed in 1931 in 12-point *Joanna* on hand-made paper. The first prospectus of the press was issued in January 1931 and *A Specimen of Three Book Types* appeared in 1934. *Joanna* was Gill's most successful book face, a classic Roman which the Monotype Corporation adapted for machine-setting in 1937. It is especially notable for its Italic, which incorporated Gill's theory of a "sloped Roman" rather than the full Italic of conventional design. Only a lower-case alphabet was designed, as Gill believed that the upper-case Roman would harmonize with it. Another theory, practised by Gill in his lettering in stone, which required that less emphasis be given to the contrast between thick and thin strokes in letter forms, was also incorporated in *Joanna*, and can easily be discerned in the large-size reproduction of the original design.

Golden Cockerel

After first refusing to work for Robert Gibbings, because he was not a Catholic, Gill agreed to contribute engravings for the Golden Cockerel Press edition of *Sonnets and Verses* by Enid Clay. He was to be intimately associated with the Press, and with the Gibbings, over the next decade, and the results of the collaboration are now regarded as among the glories of English private press productions. Gibbings commissioned the *Golden Cockerel* type face to go with an alphabet of titling initials already designed by Gill from wood engravings. It is closely related to *Perpetua* and *Joanna*

in both the Roman and Italic versions, the former cut by the Caslon foundry in 1929 and the latter in 1931. They were first used in A. E. Coppard's *The Hundreth Story* in 1931, but were more triumphantly presented the same year in *The Four Gospels* where their harmony with the elaborately designed wood-engraved initials is apparent. Twelve copies of the *Gospels* were printed on vellum, a substance which shows off both initials and text type magnificently.

Bunyan

In 1934 Gill designed a Roman face closely related to *Golden Cockerel* and *Joanna* for his own use at Pigotts which he called *Bunyan*. It was first publicly presented in the Limited Editions Club's 1936 edition of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, with etchings by Denis Tegetmeier and printed by Hague and Gill. In 1950 the Linotype organization purchased rights to *Bunyan* and had designed an Italic called *Pilgrim*, based on a few preliminary drawings by Gill.

East Reading Room: 1

Eric Gill and the Toronto Connection

N CANADA NEITHER Gill's engravings nor his influence on the British private press movement went unnoticed. By 1931, Robert Gibbings had commissioned over three hundred engravings from Gill for the Golden Cockerel Press. The books they decorated superbly exemplified a true marriage of art and craft: they were sensitively designed, produced with carefully chosen materials, and typeset, printed and bound by first class craftsmen whose skill was founded in a very old tradition. In Part Seven of *The Colophon*, Gibbings summed up the philosophy that informed his Press's approach to bookmaking:

> *The modelling of a page to a typographer should be as important as the modelling of a limb to a sculptor, and only when the decorator is in close touch with the compositor can the best result be achieved . . . The title page of* Troilus and Criseyde *shows what Eric Gill can do when engraving both lettering and ornament for combination with type.*[11]

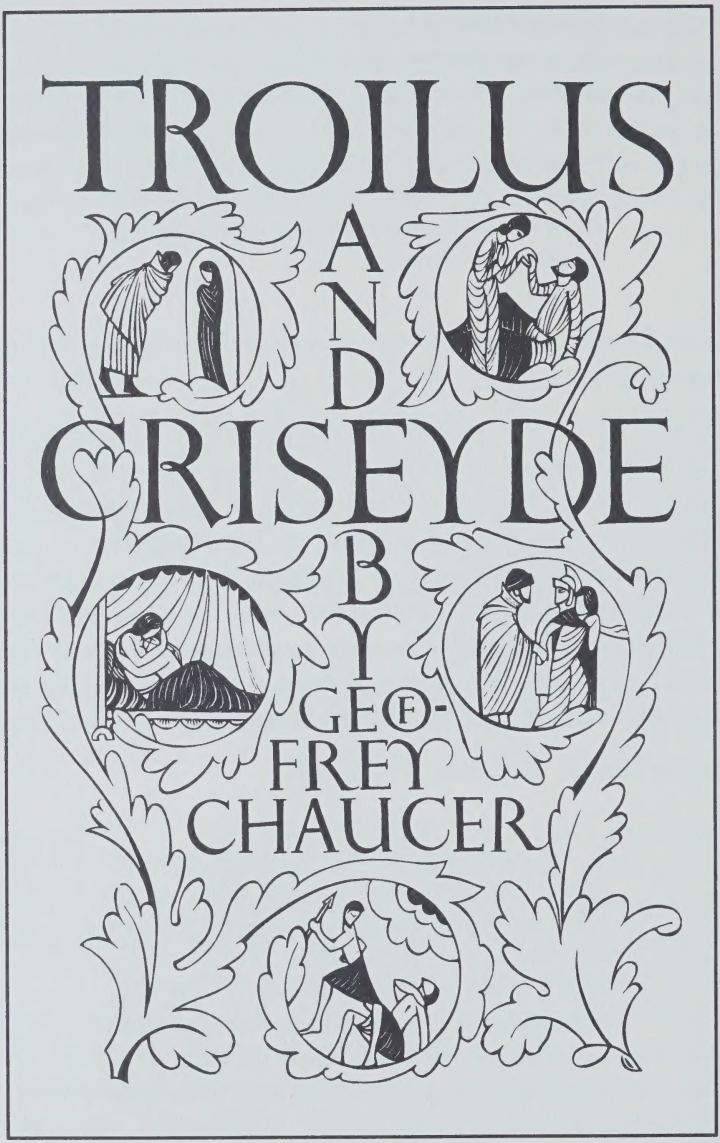
To the Canadian student of typography and fine books, this approach was an inspiration.

J. Kemp Waldie and his wife Freida returned to Canada from Europe where they had studied private press production and had begun to collect Gill's work. Kemp Waldie was interested in typography and printing techniques (which he learned as editor of *The Varsity* during his undergraduate years at the University of Toronto) and was tempted to try his hand at printing in Canada. Offended by what he considered to be low production standards among Canadian practitioners, he was stimulated by the work of the Golden Cockerel Press to attempt to raise standards in Canada by example, and in 1933 he founded the Golden Dog Press.

Marilyn Rueter describes Waldie as:

> *. . . a typographic pioneer in Canada, who was involved in every aspect of the design of his publications, even though he employed professional craftsmen to carry out his ideas. The Golden Dog Press produced only eight titles, but is significant in the history of Canadian private printing because its books were the first to reflect the spirit of the classic English private press movement, then*

[11] Gibbings, Robert. "The Golden Cockerel Press" in *The Colophon*, Part 7. New York, 1931.



Title page of *Troilus and Criseyde*, by Geoffrey Chaucer. (Golden Cockerel Press, 1927.) From Private Collection.

coming to a close . . . Typography, in fact, was Waldie's chief interest.[12]

When Gill, encouraged by Stanley Morison, designed *Perpetua* for the Monotype Corporation, Kemp Waldie imported founts for use by his new press, using that type for the first time in Canada.[13]

The Waldies were also instrumental in bringing Gill's engraved work to the attention of the Canadian public. In 1933 and 1934 they loaned many items from their collection for exhibitions at Hart House, the Art Gallery of Toronto and the gallery in the Civic Auditorium in Winnipeg. The response was enthusiastic and not without implications for the Golden Dog Press, for as Patrica Ainslie remarks, Canadian wood engraver Laurence Hyde "was particularly interested in British artists Paul Nash and Eric Gill, some of whose work was exhibited in Toronto in November 1934."[14] Gill's influence is evident in Hyde's illustrations for the Golden Dog Press, *Engravings for Macbeth*. Hyde was employed by Kemp Waldie to take care of the office. This arrangement allowed Hyde time to do his own work, and when the office was eventually closed in 1937, Waldie provided him with studio space so that he could complete the Macbeth engravings. Although the full text was never issued, Hyde's illustrations together with selections from the play were published in 1939.

This was the last Golden Dog publication. Even after the demise of the Press in 1939, the Waldies never lost their interest in the private press movement or in Gill, but their energies were now directed elsewhere. Gill's influence as a book designer and typographer has continued to be

[12]Rueter, Marilyn. "The private press in Canada" in John Gibson and Laurie Lewis. *Sticks and stones*. Toronto: Toronto Typographic Association, 1980, p. 95.

[13]*The rolling stone: the life history of an O. Henry rarity by Fanny E. Ratchford*. Toronto: The Golden Dog Press, 1934.

[14]Ainslie, Patricia. *The wood engravings of Laurence Hyde*. Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1986.

very much in evidence in Canada. Waldie's use of *Perpetua* has often been emulated, Gill's other book faces are still frequently used, and recent private press productions in Canada have shown great awareness and sensitivity to his typographic ideas. Will Rueter's Aliquando Press publications, *The making of letters*, *A ship of leaves*, *Order touched with delight*, and *The art of bookbinding* all reflect Gill's influence. Glenn Goluska, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Gill's birth, produced *A day in the life of Eric Gill, stonecutter*. More recently, *Inner necessities: the letters of David Jones to Desmond Chute* was set in Gill's *Pilgrim* and *Gill Sans* — appropriately so, for Chute and Jones were two of Gill's intimate friends.

It seems that Gill's engravings, his typography and his ideal of the artist-craftsman are all thriving in Canada in 1991.

East Reading Room: 2

Gill and Some Contemporary Engravers

MOST PEOPLE CONSIDER that the revival of wood engraving in England started in 1904 when Noel Rooke, dissatisfied with photographic processes, used wood engraving as a method of reproducing his drawings. Gill, who had been a fellow student with Rooke at Edward Johnston's lettering classes at the Central School of Art and Design in London, began experimenting with wood engraving in 1906. Meanwhile, independent of Rooke and Gill, Gwen Raverat (1885-1957), the grand-daughter of Charles Darwin and a student at the Slade, taught herself wood engraving in 1908-9. In 1915, two small books containing modern wood engravings as illustrations were published, Douglas Pepler's *The Devil's Devices*, illustrated by Eric Gill, and Frances Cornford's *Spring Morning*, illustrated by Raverat. She continued to illustrate books and magazines throughout her life, mostly with engravings, including colour engravings which she used for *The Bird Talisman* (1937).

Wood engravings were now established once again as a means of illustration. In 1916, Sidgwick and Jackson published T*he Old Vicarage, Grantchester*, with a two-page engraving by Noel Rooke, and the S. Dominic's Press began to issue its many pamphlets and other ephemera decorated by Gill and his pupils. The little magazine entitled *Change* which appeared in 1919 (there were only two numbers) contained the work of nine engravers, including Gill, Philip Hagreen and Robert Gibbings. Philip Hagreen (1890-1988) studied at Goldsmith's College of Art, and was a founder member of the Society of Wood Engravers, the first meeting of which took place in 1920 in Hagreen's studio, which he shared with David Jones. Other engravers involved included Gill, Gibbings, Rooke, Raverat and Gordon Graig. Hagreen

converted to Roman Catholicism during the First World War, and after the war, he joined Gill's group of artists at Ditchling in Sussex. In 1924, he moved with Gill to Capel-y-ffin, but from about 1925 to 1932 he lived in France, before returning to Ditchling and settling permanently in Sussex. Principally a wood engraver, Hagreen also used pen and ink for some of his book illustrations. Throughout his life, he produced many fine bookplates, which demonstrate a particular skill in lettering.

Robert Gibbings (1889-1958) was born in Ireland, and attended the Slade School of Fine Art in London and the Central School, where he studied illustration and wood engraving under Rooke. He became the first secretary to the Society of Wood Engravers, contributing twelve prints to its first exhibition in 1920. He produced ten engravings for Brantome's T*he Lives of the Gallant Ladies* in 1923 for the Golden Cockerel Press, and one year later, bought the Press and moved to Waltham St. Lawrence in Berkshire. Gibbings made the Golden Cockerel one of the more successful and popular presses in the history of the private press. Most of the books produced were illustrated with wood engravings, and he introduced many fine artists to a narrow but discerning public. Eric Gill was among the engravers he employed, though the largest proportion of the books published were illustrated by Gibbings himself. Like Gill, Gibbings was a prolific engraver and illustrator, with over one thousand engravings published in books and more than one hundred separately issued prints; he also worked as a sculptor. After he sold the Press in 1933, he wrote and illustrated a number of books of memoirs and travel which were published by J. M. Dent. *Sweet Thames Run Softly* (1940) was the first of a series which combined personal anecdotes and descriptions of natural history, beautifully illustrated with the author's engravings. J. C. H. Hadfield, writing in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, declares that his "eight 'river books', containing altogether nearly 500 engravings, all closely integrated with his own text, represent a remarkable combination of the talents of author, illustrator, and book designer".

Christopher Sandford was one of three people who took over the Golden Cockerel Press when Gibbings sold it in 1933. Sandford had married Lettice Rate in 1929; she had studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and then at the Chelsea Polytechnic (1926-9) under Graham Sutherland. Lettice Sandford (1902-) became primarily an engraver and illustrator for three presses run by her husband, the Boar's Head Press, the Golden Hours Press, and the Golden Cockerel Press. One of the books she illustrated for the last press was another edition of *The Song of Songs* (1936), and her sensuous line can be contrasted with Gill's much more erotic work.

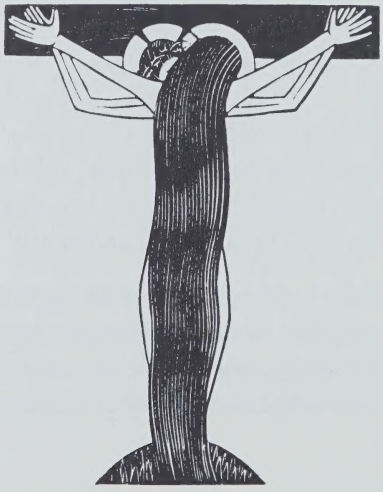
David Jones (1895-1974) first met Eric Gill in 1921, and after being received into the Roman Catholic church that same year, went to live with Gill and his family in Ditchling. Jones learned wood engraving, joined Gill's Guild of SS. Joseph and Dominic, and illustrated various publications for the S. Dominic's Press. When Gill moved to Capel-y-ffin and subsequently to Pigotts, Jones paid many long visits. In 1924 he became engaged to Gill's daughter, Petra, but the engagement was broken off in 1927 and he never married.

The influence of Gill is strong in Jones's early wood engravings, but not apparent in the copper engravings, water colours or inscriptions. He joined the Society of Wood Engravers in 1927, and illustrated several books for the Golden Cockerel Press. He began to engrave in copper in 1925, and in 1929, Douglas Cleverdon, a young Bristol bookseller and publisher and one of Gill's "disciples" published an edition of Coleridge's The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, illustrated with ten copper engravings. Eye trouble forced him to give up engraving in 1930, and in 1933 he suffered a nervous breakdown and made no more prints.

In the short period of time that he was engraving, Jones produced a great deal of work of great variety. His engravings are distinguished by the excellence of their design and by their complete individuality. The *Ancient Mariner* is a major achievement of book illustration. Jones was also

a prolific and highly acclaimed water colourist, producing many English and Welsh landscapes, still-lifes, and complex drawings of religious and mythical subjects. He began making inscriptions fairly late in his life; and wrote poetry, essays and criticism. W. H. Auden hailed *The Anathemata* (1952) as "very probably the finest long poem written in English this century".

Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) was the son of the great British actress, Ellen Terry, and the brilliant but erratic William Godwin, architect, scene designer and critic. Craig became a theatre designer and a woodcut artist, and his influence in both spheres was seminal. He illustrated only a few books, the outstanding example of which is the Cranach Press *Hamlet*, produced by Count Harry Kessler in Germany in 1927. Kessler was Eric Gill's great patron, and for this book Gill designed the title-page lettering. Craig's illustrations created powerful and startling images, using solid black silhoutted figures with a few interior white lines to indicate clothes and limbs. The Cranach Press *Hamlet* is one of the most striking and imaginative books of the twentieth century.



East Reading Room: 3

A Collection of Eric Gill's Engravings

ILL PRODUCED an estimated 1,000 engravings in his lifetime, mostly done on the wood. The engravings on display in this room have been most generously lent by a private collector and give an indication of the immense output of this prolific artist in this one field. They have been arranged in roughly chronological order, and are a mixture of those produced as individual prints and as proofs of illustrations which Gill made for a variety of publications. Many are signed and numbered.

1 - 2 *The Devil's devices; or, Control versus service*. Douglas Pepler. Hammersmith: The Hampshire House Workshops, 1915.

This small book contains twelve wood engravings by Gill. It is one of the first 20th century books to be illustrated with modern wood engravings.

3 *Adeste fideles: a Christian hymn*. Ditchling: printed by Douglas Pepler, 1915.

Five engravings by Gill.

4 - 5 "Christmas gifts: daylight" 1916; and "Christmas gifts: dawn" 1916.

These two engravings of the three wise men bringing gifts to the newborn Christ were used variously in *Christmas* (S. Dominic's Press, nd); *The Game* vol. 1 no. 2; and *Nisi Dominus* (S. Dominic's Press, 1919).

6 *God and the dragon*. Rhymes by Douglas Pepler. Ditchling: Pepler, 1917.

These three small engravings ("Epiphany"; "Palm Sunday"; and "Adam and Eve") were among the fifteen in the small book.

"The plait", 1922: a portrait of Petra Gill, the artist's daughter. From Private Collection.

7 "Crucifix" 1917

Printed in orange; after a crucifix in a window of York Minster.

8 "Crucifix" 1919

Printed in red.

9 Six small engravings 1917

Some were used on funeral cards, others were printed in *The Game*.

10 - 14 *The way of the Cross*. Ditchling: Pepler, 1917.

Gill made fifteen wood engravings based on his designs for the "Stations of the Cross" which he carved in stone for Westminster Cathedral: five are shown here.

15 "Madonna and child" 1919

Design for a poster.

16 "Our Lady of Lourdes" 1920

17 "New England woods" 1920

An illustration for *Three poems* by Ananda Coomaraswamy (Ditchling: S. Dominic's Press, 1920).

18 "Girl with deer" 1920

Gill engraved many bookplates, including some for books from his own library (a few of these are exhibited elsewhere). Many of these are pictorial and most feature a nude woman, though several consist simply of engraved script. This plate was done for Ananda Coomaraswamy, a philosopher and critic and expert on the arts of India. Gill often repeated Coomaraswamy's words, "An artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."

19 - 20 "Dress, 1860" and "Dress, 1920" are engravings used to illustrate *Dress* (Welfare Handbook No. 7). Ditchling: S. Dominic's Press, 1921.

21 - 22 "Girl in bath" 1922 and "Girl in bath" 1923 are both portraits of Gill's daughter, Petra.

23 "The plait" 1922

Another portrait of Petra.

24 "Clare" 1922

A portrait of Mrs. H. D. C. Pepler

25 "Teresa and Winifred Maxwell" 1923

26 - 27 "The Order of Industrial Heroism" 1923

Shown are the original drawing for this award, proposed by the London *Daily Herald* newspaper, including the lettering (From the Collections at the University of Waterloo Library); and the wood engraving with the Holy Ghost as dove which was replaced in a second version by a star. The concept was dropped at a later stage.

28 "Tennis player" 1923

After a photograph in the London *Daily Mirror*.

29 A watercolour nude 1924

30 "Portrait of a lady" 1924

A copper engraving of Moira, Mrs. Robert Gibbings. Gill's friendship with Moira and Robert Gibbings, the artist, writer and proprietor of the Golden Cockerel Press, expanded into a passionate *ménage à trois* during the many long weekends which Gill spent with the Gibbings in Waltham St. Lawrence, near Twyford in Berkshire.

31 "The convert" 1925

Romney Gill, Eric's missionary brother, wrote from Papua - New Guinea, describing a practically naked young woman and her infant son who sat just inside his Station Chapel. The scene appealed to Gill's feelings about religion, sensuality and reverence for the maternal image.

32 "Saint Bernadette" 1926

33 - 34 "The skaters" 1926

Two states of a copper engraving inspired by a photograph of two men skating published in the London *Daily Mirror*.

35 "Nativity" 1927

An illustration for *Gloria in profundis* by G. K. Chesterton, number 5 in the series of "Ariel Poems", published by Faber and Gwyer

"Transiliens colles"

"Ibi dabo tibi"

From *Canticum Canticorum.* (Weimar: Cranach Press, 1931.) From Private Collection.

in 1929. The first series of 38 poems, produced between 1927 and 1931, were beautifully printed by the Curwen Press in London.

36 - 42 *The song of songs*. Golden Cockerel Press, 1925.

Gill illustrated two versions of the "Song of Songs", the first for the Golden Cockerel Press, and the second for the Cranach Press in Weimar, Germany (*Canticum canticorum*, 1930). The sensual and erotic engravings he produced for both books are exquisite, yet show the use of quite different styles and techniques. Here are exhibited copies of six of the twenty engravings from the Golden Cockerel Press edition, with an additional one from the Prospectus.

36 "Holy Spirit as dove" (1925) and "A garden enclosed" 1925

37 "The harem" 1925

38 "Skipping upon the mountains" 1925

39 "On my bed by night" 1925

40 "The kiss" 1925

41 "Ibi dabo tibi" 1925

42 "Stay me with apples" 1925

43 - 48 *Canticum canticorum*. Weimar: Cranach Press, 1931.

The book, which is one example of the work which Gill did for his long-time patron, Count Harry Kessler, who owned the Cranach Press in Weimar, Germany, contains eleven illustrations and eighteen initial letters, all engraved on wood. Six illustrations are shown, and they are very different from those done for the Golden Cockerel Press version. Here Gill used a "white line" technique, with stippling to give texture to the large dark areas.

43 "Nigra sum sed formosa" 1927

44 "Transiliens collis" 1930

45 "Hortus conclusus" 1930

46 "Dilecti mei pulsantis" 1930

47 "Ibi dabo tibi" 1930

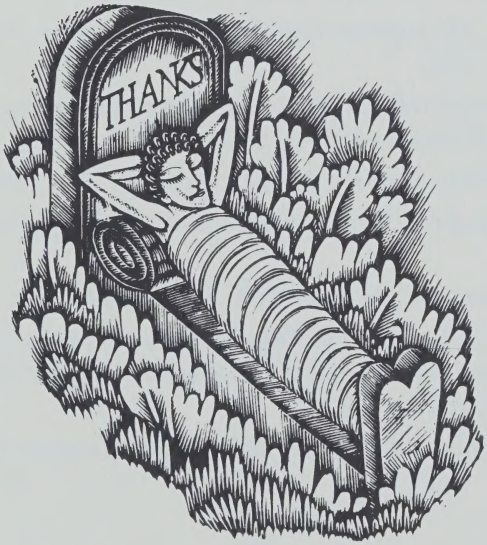
48 "In domum matris meae" 1930

49 "The empty bed"

Gill started working for the Golden Cockerel Press when he was asked to illustrate *Sonnets and Verses* (1925) by his eldest sister, Enid Clay. This illustration is from her second book for the Press, *The Constant Mistress* (1934). (From the Collections at the University of Waterloo Library)

50 "Christmas card" 1937

A card, illustrated by Gill and Eileen Gainsborough, and designed for, and printed by, Douglas Cleverdon, a Bristol bookseller and publisher who became a friend and disciple of Gill. He distributed Gill's *Id Quod Visum Placet*, which had been printed in 1926 by the Golden Cockerel Press for Gill; and later published Gill's *Art and Love* (1928) and *Engravings* (1929).



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